

A Chat With

Gertude Atherton

By ALMA LUISE OLSEN.

THE moon was very bright and the Hudson very black by contrast. Suppose that whirring sound were not that of motor cars and buses but came from a huge airplane overhead! And suppose the airplane descended very low and dropped a book which would alter the whole course of our lives!

Of course the idea wasn't original. It came of reading Gertrude Atherton's *The White Morning*, coupled with the suggestion that the book ought to be translated into German and dropped from airplanes so that the German women might read it and perhaps be stirred into the very kind of revolt which the book describes.

Mrs. Atherton herself admitted it might be done, looking up from a pile of papers a foot deep on her desk. It was not manuscript of a novel, but letters from all over the country in answer to her recent request for dictations to go to France.

"Every one is so willing to help win the war!" she exclaimed. "To be sure it means a little extra work for me when the butcher and the baker and the candlestick maker turn into would-be dictators over night and write and ask me if I won't send them to France; but I don't mind answering all those additional letters—at least not much."

Coming, "The Avalanche."

It looked as if her work for *Le Bien-Etre du Blessé* had submerged Mrs. Atherton, the novelist, completely. She read the unspoken question in the visitor's eyes, laughed and said:

"No, the manuscript of my new story isn't here. It's over in New Jersey in a quiet little country spot where I run off to for several days in the week to write. I finished the story last Friday. It had thirteen chapters! Thirteen isn't my unlucky number, but I thought I wouldn't tempt Providence too far and broke up the last chapter into two, making fourteen in all."

"I wrote and copied 50,000 words in seven weeks—which shows what one can do away from the telephone. No, it isn't a war story this time. I've called it *The Avalanche*, and it's a California tale."

"Margaret Anglin told me the original incident and attempted to persuade me to write it as a play for her. Now that the book is finished she would never recognize any part of it but an incident in the climax."

"That's always the way with writing novels and stories. I never know how

Two Novels by Berta Ruck



BERTA RUCK
(MRS. OLIVER ONIONS) AND HER SONS
Author of "The Three of Hearts," "His Official Fiancee"

IT does not fall to the lot of many authors to have two novels put on the market at once. Berta Ruck (Mrs. Oliver Onions) is the lucky writer who is allowed the double throw this season. One of the books is *His Official Fiancee*, which is not new, but is now being published in about the fifteenth edition, and the other is a new novel entitled *The Three of Hearts*, a diverting account of the troubles of a bashful youth who pro-

posed to several girls at once, without the slightest intention of so doing. *His Official Fiancee* is about a terribly dignified young business man of London who wishes to appear before his family and the world in general as engaged. The girl chosen to help him effect this tells the story.

HIS OFFICIAL FIANCEE. By BERTA RUCK. Dodd, Mead & Co. \$1.50.
THE THREE OF HEARTS. By BERTA RUCK. Dodd, Mead & Co. \$1.40.

and—well, my books are the result. I got the idea from Taine when I was very young."

The "missing" man, says Capt. Alan Bott, author of *Cavalry of the Clouds*, "if he be a prisoner and a wise man enters a small check for the German Red Cross, as being the quickest way of letting his bankers and relations know he is alive."

plain people and the proletariat and such things. No one but myself has ever told anything about social life in San Francisco. It is full of drama. It resembles New York in part, but it has a character all its own."

Mrs. Atherton works every morning from 7 until noon, Hooverizing on dry bread and tea. She began to make stories when she was about 6 and could only tell them to herself in the glass. She always wanted to travel, and when she couldn't do that—her husband would not stir out of California until he went to Chile as a guest on a warship and died on it—she would amuse herself by writing complete travel books, taking her characters through all parts of Europe, and she knew enough geography to make the accounts truthful.

"And I believe," Mrs. Atherton says, "that I apply some of those same ideas to my writing of fiction to-day. Most lives are humdrum and commonplace, on the surface at least. So I take characters that haven't had half a chance in real life and recreate their destinies for them."

OVER THERE AND BACK

By Lieut. Joseph S. Smith

"We thank E. P. Dutton & Co. for this book right out of the heart of the maelstrom of war. For it gives us, through the smoke, a gleam of a holy grail that death cannot kill, the ever-sought, but rarely found, spirit of beauty in human love for fellow-man and animal friend."

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GERTRUDE ATHERTON
Author of "The White Morning" etc.

they are going to come out when I begin any more than I could take a child right now and say just how I was going to shape its whole life. This new story, by the way, is laid in San Francisco and deals with society life.

"Most writers who describe California in their books tell about nature and the

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BRENTANO'S

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Some Idea

That of Skinner's!

IT was Skinner's idea, but he took his tip from McLaughlin, whose business slogan was to "punch 'em on the nose." Still it was a mean trick of McLaughlin & Perkins to leave the junior partner to fire all the old men who had helped to build up the business.

The senior partners—leaving Skinner to do the dirty work—had gone down to South America with the avowed purpose of putting the misguided South American merchants through a conkological course; in other words with the object of making them sit up by doing them right between the eyes, for the everlasting glory, the future prestige and the immediate emolument of the business house of McLaughlin & Perkins.

Skinner's Tough Job.

Skinner had a heart. He hated to do it, but he was only a junior partner—had only a minority say in the matter; well, he would do it: Replace the rut riding old men with young men of initiative. How he would do it he didn't know, but he would replace them—and he did! How? Took a leaf from McLaughlin's book of business ethics, and punched them fairly and squarely, individually and collectively, right on the nose.

Irrespective of age or years of service, he brought them up with a jolt. Threw the entire responsibility of running the office upon these men who had grown old in evading responsibility, who—for years—had never dared to do anything without asking whether it should be done or how it should be done. Threw all the responsibility on these poor old duffers and tied to the woods, with a malevolent chuckle, at a time when the most important business deals in the history of the house were pending.

To reply paid telegrams Skinner returned no answer. To telephone messages his wife answered in the suavest of tones and as if she were glad of it that Skinner was under observation at the sanatorium.

Back to See the Fun.

The very thought of those old rut riders, blown out of their trenches and compelled to fight out in the open, acted like a tonic on Skinner. He felt and looked ten years younger, but he couldn't stand it any longer, he had just got to see the show; so, staging the part with clothes of the loudest and most juvenile cut, he blows in among them.

The old boys look tired, but there is a new glint in their eyes. They have acted, have had to act! And because of long years of intimate knowledge of the intricate details of the business they have acted well. But save for the new glint in their eyes there is no change to note in their appearance.

If Skinner hadn't acted so impetuously—but enough. Skinner's elixir of youth can be obtained in any wide open town. The prescription will be filled at any book store. Ask for *Skinner's Big Idea*.

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